R2 Digital Library

eBook Aggregator

Preview Date: 7 November 2016

Recommendation	No Further Review

Launched in 2005 by Rittenhouse Book Distributors, Inc., R2 Digital Library is an ebook aggregator for health science collections focusing on medical, nursing and allied health ebooks. It is a third-party ebook platform with title-level content purchasing options.

Method

The reviewer spent about 8 hours exploring R2 Digital Library, including examining the ebook platform, and reading the FAQ on the trial site, Rittenhouse's announcement and relevant reviews.
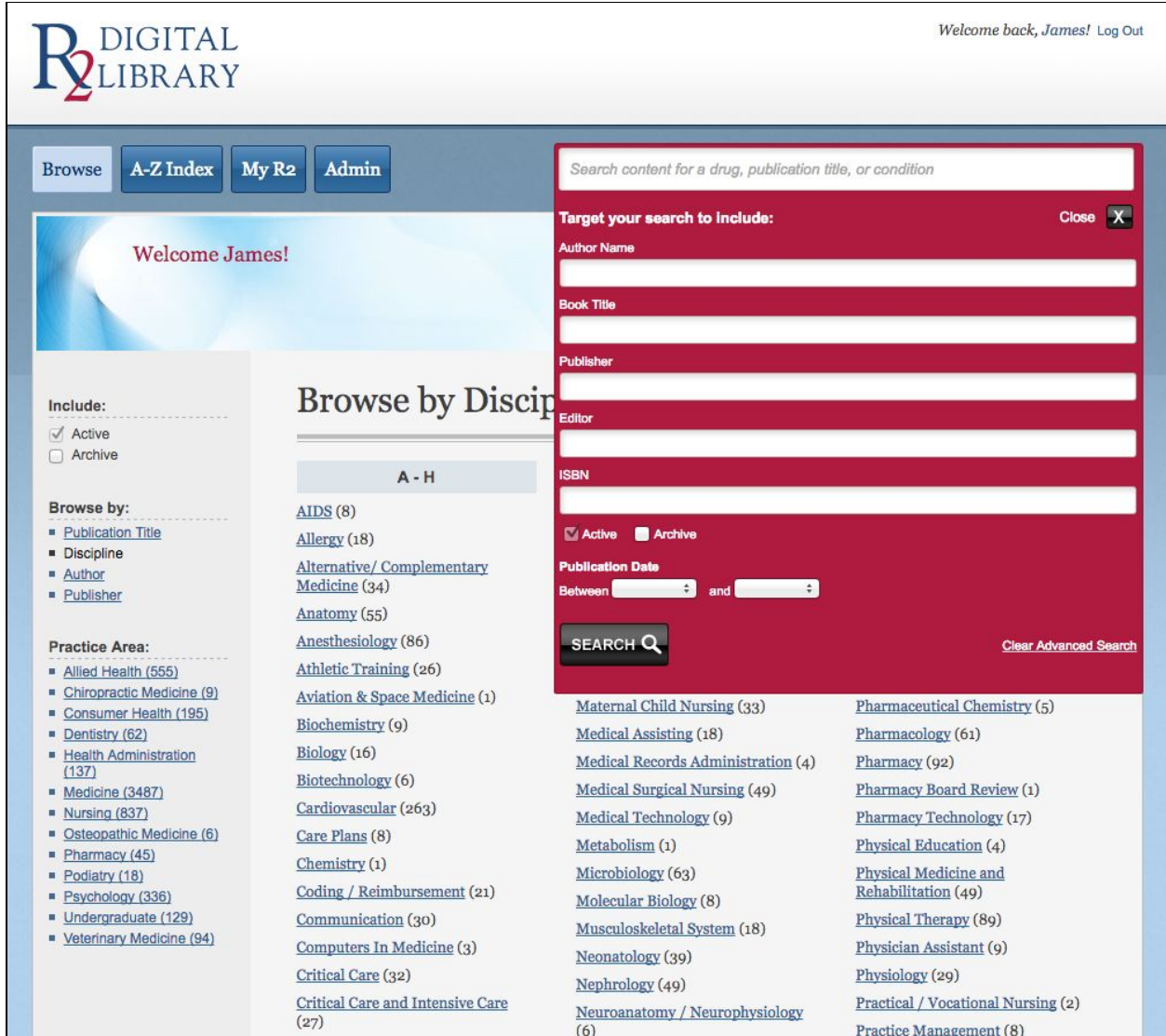
Preview

- Content

R2 Digital Library is an aggregate ebook platform specializing in health science titles. If offers over 5,000 ebooks from more than 70 publishers. It has extensive selections, more than 380 titles, of Doody's Core Titles and some 800 additional nursing titles. Publishers in R2 range from some of the largest health science publishers such as Elsevier and Lippincott Williams & Wilkins to associations and academies such as American Medical Association and Cambridge University Press.

- Interface

In basic search, users can search by drug or disease names, titles or keywords, and results are ranked by relevance by default. Users can locate medical images or videos by doing a keyword search and then selecting the Images or Videos filter. Searches may be faceted by discipline, practice area and publication date. The advanced search allows users to add an author/editor, title, publisher, publication date, or ISBN to their basic keyword search. Users can limit their search to active (current edition) or archive (old edition) titles in basic and advanced searches (see screenshot below). R2 Digital Library offers alternative search terms on the result screen. For example, when searching for "macular degeneration," it suggests searching also for "retinal drusen" and "retinoschisis."

Users can browse by disciplines which is the default. However, they can choose to browse by author, publisher or publication title. They can save searches, search results and ebook sections to their My R2 profile.

- Accessibility

The R2 images do not include alternative text and the videos are not closed-captioned in R2. In a correspondence with the CCL Consortium Director, Rittenhouse made it clear that the company does not intend to make its content WCAG 2.0 AA compliant because they are limited to what ebook publishers offer them as a third-party.

The R2 Digital Library runs on all major browsers and operating systems. Links from R2 can be embedded in integrated library system and learning management system. It can be accessed through IP authentication on campus, or username and password remotely. The ebooks are displayed as HTML, so no PDF viewer is required. Users cannot download the entire ebook in R2, but they can export citations, print and email page(s) of an ebook that is currently being displayed on their computer.

- Support

An FAQ for librarians and a User Guide for end-users are provided on R2 Digital Library website. COUNTER 4.0 compliant usage statistics and MARC records are available. They can be downloaded, printed or emailed directly from the R2 Digital Library. Librarians can sign up to receive email notifications when new editions of titles in their R2 collection becomes available. Librarians can customize their R2 Digital Library in the Admin portal.

In addition to the User Guide in PDF format, end-users can email their questions to their librarians through the Ask Your Librarian link or email Rittenhouse directly via the Contact Us link on R2 Digital Library website.

- Cost and terms of use

Titles in R2 Digital Library are sold individually with a minimum of one user license. Libraries can purchase as many user licenses as they wish. R2 also offers a mediated Patron Driven Acquisition model. Once paid for the title is owned by the library perpetually. When newer edition of a title is published, the current title owned by the library is archived and is still accessible by the library. There is an annual maintenance fee of $1,200 for archiving, image hosting, etc. This fee is waived for the first year and can be paid annually or monthly.

The reviewer discovered that many titles are available more cheaply on other ebook platforms, even with unlimited concurrent users.

Recommendation

With one of the most extensive selections of Doody's Core Titles and ebooks from major health science publishers, colleges with allied health programs may want to consider R2 Digital Library. Keep in mind that many titles are available from other ebook platforms more cheaply. California community colleges should be aware that R2 Digital Library platform is not WCAG 2.0 AA-compliant and Rittenhouse has no intention of making it more compliant. With a commitment to strive toward offering products that meet WCAG 2.0 AA standard, the Consortium has pulled its offering of R2 Digital Library.

Other Reviews

"Ebook Platform from Rittenhouse." *Library Journal* 134.5 (2009): 20. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 27 Oct. 2016.

Knight-Davis, L. "R2 Digital Library." *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries* 50.11 (2013): 1986. *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts*. Web. 27 Oct. 2016.

"Solutions and Services." *American Libraries* 42.3/4 (2011): 58-59. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 27 Oct. 2016.

Walton, Deedra J. "R2 Digital Library Review." *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries* 13.2 (2016): 56-68. *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts*. Web. 27 Oct. 2016.